

**James Madison to Henry Clay, June, 1833.
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TO HENRY CLAY. MAD. MSS.

June, 1833.

Dear Sir, Your letter of May 28, was duly received.¹ In it you ask my opinion on the retention of the Land bill by the President.

¹ Clay's letter said that by 1842, he thought, Northern manufacturers would be able to sell most of their products without protection as cheaply as they could be bought in Europe.—*Chic. Hist. Soc. MSS.*

It is obvious that the Constitution meant to allow the President an adequate time to consider the Bills &c presented to him, and to make his objections to them; and on the other hand that Congs. should have time to consider and overrule the objections. A disregard on either side of what it owes to the other, must be an abuse, for which it would be responsible under the forms of the Constitution. An abuse on the part of the President, with a view sufficiently manifest, in a case of sufficient magnitude to deprive Congs. of the opportunity of overruling objections to their bills, might doubtless be a ground for impeachment. But nothing short of the signature of the President, or a lapse of ten days without a return of his objections, or an overruling of the objections by # of each House of Congs., can give legal validity to a Bill. In order to qualify (in the French sense of the term) the retention of the Land bill by the President, the first inquiry is, whether a sufficient

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time was allowed him to decide on its merits; the next whether with a sufficient time to prepare his objections, he unnecessarily put it out of the power of Congs. to decide on them. How far an anticipated passage of the Bill ought to enter into the sufficiency of the time for Executive deliberation, is another point for consideration. A minor one may be whether a silent retention or an assignment to Congs. of the reasons for it, be the mode most suitable, to such occasions.

I hope with you that the compromising tariff will have a course & effect avoiding a renewal of the contest between the S. and the North; and that a lapse of nine or ten years will enable the manufacturers to swim without the bladders which have supported them. Many considerations favor such a prospect. They will be saved in future much of the expence in *fixtures*, which they had to encounter, and in many instances unnecessarily incurred. They will be continually improving in the management of their business. They will not fail to improve occasionally on the machinery abroad. The reduction of duties on imported articles consumed by them will be equivalent to a direct bounty. There will probably be an increasing cheapness of food from the increasing redundancy of agricultural labour. There will within the experimental period be an addition of 4 or 5 millions to our population, no part or little of which will be needed for agricultural labour, and which will consequently be an extensive fund of manufacturing recruits. The current experience makes it probable, that not less than 50 or 60 thousand or more, of emigrants will annually reach the U. S. a large portion of whom will have been trained to manufactures and be ready for that employment.

With respect to Virga., it is quite probable from the progress already made in the Western Culture of Tobo., and the rapid exhaustion of her virgin soil in which alone it can be cultivated with a chance of profit, that of the 40 or 50 thousand labourers on Tobo., the greater part will be released from that employment, and be applicable to that of manufactures. It is well known that the farming system requires much fewer hands than Tobo. fields.

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Should a war break out in Europe involving the manufacturing nations the rise of the wages there will be another brace to the manufacturing establishments here. It will do more; it will prove to the “absolutists” for free trade that there is in the contingency of war, one exception at least to their Theory.

It is painful to observe the unceasing efforts to alarm the South by imputations agst the North of unconstitutional designs on the subject of the slaves. You are right, I have no doubt in believing that no such intermeddling disposition exists in the Body of our Northern brethren. Their good faith is sufficiently guarantied by the interest they have, as merchants, as Ship owners, and as manufacturers, in preserving a Union with the slaveholding States. On the other hand, what *madness* in the South, to look for greater safety in disunion. It would be worse than jumping out of the Frying-pan into the fire: it wd. be jumping into the fire for fear of the Frying-pan. The danger from the alarm is that the pride & resentment exerted by them may be an overmatch for the dictates of prudence and favor the project of a Southern Convention insidiously revived, as promising by its Councils the best securities agst grievances of every sort from the North.

The case of the Tariff & Land bills cannot fail of an influence on the question of your return to the next session of Congs. They are both closely connected with the public repose.